

Waterfowl Management at the Marina: Public Health, Safety, and Fact Sheet

Executive summary

Our goal is simple: keep the Marina safe and enjoyable for families while respecting wildlife. We operate under state and federal permits and with guidance from wildlife professionals. We do not scatter “poison” around the Marina. When management is necessary, it is planned, permitted, and supervised, with the least-disruptive tools used first and stronger measures used only when health and safety require it.

What’s actually happening

Oversight and permits. Work is coordinated with USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Nevada Department of Wildlife under federal and state authorities for migratory bird damage management and public health protection. Methods are chosen within permit conditions and professional Standard Operating Procedures.

Why we act. Large, non-migrating flocks concentrate waste on beaches, lawns, and docks. A single goose can produce approximately 1 to 1.5 pounds of droppings a day, elevating E. coli and other bacteria, degrading water, and creating slippery, unsanitary areas. Aggressive nesting behavior and roadway hazards also create risks. Airports and municipalities across Nevada manage similar issues for safety and across the Country.

Our approach. Education and “do not feed” enforcement; habitat adjustments such as landscaping and shoreline access; deterrents such as trained dogs and other hazing tools where permitted; seasonal nest and egg management under federal rules; and, when necessary, population reduction if health and safety risks persist and permits allow. This is the standard Integrated Wildlife Damage Management model used statewide.

Public health and safety

Water quality. Concentrated droppings raise bacteria such as E. coli and introduce pathogens such as Salmonella, Campylobacter, Cryptosporidium, and Giardia that put children, swimmers, and pets at risk. We conduct water and fecal testing seasonally.

Avian influenza monitoring. When sick or dead birds are reported, state officials sample for avian flu. Managing high-density resident flocks reduces transmission risks to wildlife and domestic animals.

Duck and goose mites. Heavy bird use can bring nuisance mites to grass, sand, or docks. They can bite humans, causing itchy welts, and the problem worsens with excess fecal matter. Duck mites, sometimes called “swimmer’s itch” parasites, originate from waterfowl. They are carried by ducks and geese and part of their life cycle passes through

snails in shallow water. When large numbers of ducks and geese gather in one place, the parasite population builds up. The immature mites can mistakenly bite people when they leave the water, causing red, itchy welts on the skin. While they don't survive long on humans, the bites can be painful, irritating, and sometimes lead to secondary infections from scratching. This is another reason why keeping waterfowl populations at manageable levels is critical — it reduces parasite transmission and helps protect families and pets who use the Marina.

About alpha-chloralose(sedative, not poison)

Alpha-chloralose is not a poison — it is a sedative. It is carefully dosed and used under state and federal permits by USDA professionals to temporarily calm birds for safe capture. The “poison” claim is misleading. In very high amounts, any chemical can be harmful — just like the weed sprays we use on road edges. At low, regulated doses those sprays control weeds safely, and in high, misused doses they could be dangerous. Alpha-chloralose works the same way: at the controlled levels allowed under permit, it is a safe and humane wildlife management tool, not scattered poison.

What it is. A centrally acting sedative used by trained wildlife professionals to temporarily like USDA, not SCA, to calm certain birds for live capture.

How it is used. Precisely dosed bait is deployed and teams monitor constantly and handle birds safely.

Is it poison. No. The intent is capture, without stressing the birds even further by chasing. Like many tools, including weed sprays used along roads at very low, regulated doses, dose and supervision determine safety.

Human and pet exposure. Operations are controlled and localized. Community notification focuses on temporary area closures and keeping people and pets out of active work zones during operations.

Why relocation is not our primary tool

Wildlife agencies advise that relocated geese often return and that moving birds can spread disease. In Nevada, relocation has been limited in many settings due to avian flu risks. Airports and cities typically pair deterrents, habitat change, and permitted removals to achieve lasting results.

Why we do not allow hunting or donate birds

Hunting near the Marina is illegal and unsafe given homes, playgrounds, and public use. Insurance and Nevada law restrict discharging firearms near residences. Donating birds as food is not insurable for an HOA. Food safety rules and liability exposure could fall back on the Association and property owners. Federally approved management tools that minimize both health risks and liability are the appropriate path.

What we have done

SCA has discussed geese management in open meetings and renewed permits over multiple years, beginning in 2017, including anti-feeding rules, dog and deterrent patrols, habitat changes, seasonal closures, and coordination with NDOW and USDA. Examples include January 25, 2017 approval of timeline and methods and anti-feeding rule; spring and summer 2017 implementation updates; annual meeting updates starting in 2017; and ongoing permit renewals and reporting. We will continue posting meeting updates and seasonal testing results on the SCA website so residents can follow progress and see data as we follow Nevada Open Meeting Law like any City or County does.

Frequently asked questions

Are you spreading poison around where kids and pets play.

No. We do not scatter poison. If alpha-chloralose is used, it is precision-dosed bait handled by USDA professionals with continuous monitoring to capture birds. It is not the same as pesticide pellets.

Why not just let nature be.

Our Marina is not natural wilderness. It is a human-built, predator-free, well-watered open lawn that causes geese to stay year-round. Without management, droppings accumulate, bacteria rise, and family use declines. The goal is balance, not elimination.

Why not relocate them.

Relocated geese often return and may spread disease. Effective programs combine deterrents, habitat change, and permitted population controls. These decisions are for the wildlife management agencies like NDOW to do.

Why can't we hunt or donate the birds.

Hunting near homes and playgrounds is unlawful and unsafe due to Nevada law. Donating birds creates food-safety and insurance liabilities that fall back on the Association and owners which our insurance has noted against.

Isn't alpha-chloralose dangerous to people.

Any sedative is dangerous if misused, which is why it is restricted to licensed teams under

federal oversight by the USDA, not SCA. Operations are contained, brief, and noticed or closed as needed to prevent public contact just to be safe.

Are kids and pets safe at the beach. Yes. Areas are tested, cleaned, and posted. Temporary closures happen when needed to protect the public.

Can I volunteer to help. Yes. Please help educate neighbors not to feed birds and report concerns to the SCA email so we can officially log and resolve them.